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HELLFROST

• OPTIONAL •

LIFE AFTER DEATH

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● INTRODUCTION ●

With the exception of coming back as an undead, a fate actually reserved for the body, not the mind or spirit, death is pretty much final. Earning glory in life might allow one's name to survive through the ages, and starting a family ensures one's lineage continues for at least another generation, but the hero won't be adventuring anymore. This free supplement of optional material looks at life after death. These rules require the free *Rune Bennies* supplement, available from the Triple Ace Games website.

● ADVENTURING AFTER DEATH ●

Aside from new geography, a Godsheim campaign is little different to a standard one—the heroes can still adventure, steal gold, and slay monsters. The gods have many enemies, most notably giants and dragons, but legions of orcs inhabit the mountains, and Hela's undead minions are always abroad causing mayhem. One advantage to playing in Godsheim is that it allows players to dust off long-dead characters and continue playing.

SETTING RULES

Adventuring in Godsheim involves new setting rules. While there are quite a few, many do not need to be referenced once they first take effect.

BENNIES

In Godsheim, a character's bennies, no matter the source (Common Bond, earned for roleplaying, etc.), always act like rune bennies of his patron deity, or affiliated major deity if they worship a minor god. See the free *Rune Bennies* download. These are always used as per Option 3 (Heroic). Wild Card monsters and NPCs also use this same rule, making them more formidable than their mortal counterparts. The bennies in the GM's communal pool remain generic one, as per the standard rules.

For clarification, unless otherwise stated, rune bennies spent to trigger a roll or action, such as Soaking, removing a Shaken condition, or trying to shape reality do not activate any of the rune bennies special bonuses. In this regard they are simply discarded, as normal bennies would be.

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COMBAT

Thanks to the discovery of Death (see *Region Guide #6*), nothing is truly immortal. The characters are as susceptible to damage as they were in life. Thus, combat, injury, and healing work as normal in Godsheim. The soul of a character who dies in Godsheim is irrevocably destroyed. It joins with its patron deity, losing all self-identity and individuality.

Just so we're clear from the start, characters have absolutely no chance of slaying a god. Although not immortal, their powers remain beyond the comprehension of the heroes. Only a god may slay another god, something strictly banned by the Compact. Even Scaetha has no plans or desires to kill Hela, her eternal enemy, and not even Hela is insane enough to try and slay Scaetha.

FOLLOWERS

The characters might have been mighty kings and leaders of men in life, but in the Afterlife they are servants of the gods. All character gain the Orders Hindrance with respect to their patron deity. While heroes do not begin with a Connections Edge to their god, they may take it in play. However, there is an additional requirement—the character must have been devoted or a cleric in life.

NEW CHARACTERS

Players who elect to build new characters for use in a Godsheim campaign are not restricted by race, gender, or even historical era. Thus, characters might have died in the Blizzard War or the ravages of the Liche-Priest, or been born long before the rise of the Anari and the creation of the Convocation. They must, however, come from the races and cultures in the *Hellfrost Player's Guide*. Depending on the character's starting Rank, the GM may permit the players to take on the roles of famous heroes from bygone days.

NO CHANGE IN RELIGIOUS STATUS

Although characters can take the Arcane Background (Miracles) Edge after death (see Spiritual Powers below), they are not seen as clerics. Indeed, once a soul reaches Godsheim, it cannot alter its level of faith. Characters cannot become devoted, true clerics, or take their god's Disciple Edge in play (or after character generation for newly created Godsheim characters).

NO GLORY

Glory is very much a mortal recognition scheme. Godsheim characters retain any existing Glory awards, but can no longer earn Glory.

PATRON DEITIES

Souls lack the free will of mortals and are forever

bound to their patron deity on entering Godsheim. Those rare souls who manage to escape being sentenced to the Abyss and somehow find a welcome in Godsheim without having a patron in life *must* now choose one.

While characters who have a minor deity as patron may continue to serve the god in death, every character must be ultimately associated with one of the major gods. The worshipper must pick one of the minor gods affiliated deities, assuming they grant a choice. This cannot be changed later.

For example, Hagvirkr, minor god of forging weapons, is affiliated with Ertha and Kenaz. The character may continue to worship Hagvirkr, but he must also pick between the minor god's Ertha and Kenaz aspects.

POWER OF FAITH

A character with a strong Faith is much more potent in Godsheim. As a free action, he can spend a benny to use his Faith die instead of another Trait, picked by the hero when he spends his benny. This swap lasts until the start of his next turn. This effect can be applied even to untrained skills, and cannot be *dispelled*, *negated*, *disrupted*, or otherwise cancelled.

Note that if a benny has to be spent to trigger an effect and the hero wants to switch the usual Trait for Faith, then a total of two bennies must be spent—one to trigger the roll, and another to use Faith.

For instance, Stefan has Vigor d6 and Faith d10. He suffers a serious injury, which he wants to Soak. With such a low Vigor, he elects to use his Faith, instead. He spends one benny to make a Soak roll, and a second benny to swap Faith for his Vigor. Until the start of his next turn, he continues to use Faith instead of his Vigor.

SHAPING REALITY

As noted in *Region Guide #46*, Godsheim is a realm of overlapping, simultaneously existing realities, not one realm of shared belief. Ironically, reality can be more important here than is the mortal realm. The default "setting" for Godsheim, as described in the Region Guide, is a neutral one. Here no god is supreme. No hero suffers from this, but neither does he benefit.

As an action, a character can attempt to impose his view of Godsheim, effectively stamping his god's authority the realm, albeit only on his person. This requires the character to spend a benny *and* make a Faith roll at -2 as an action. A hero can only benefit from one imposed reality at a times.

With success, the character gains his rune benny's Trait Benefit as a constant modifier for the next hour. Where there is a choice of benefits, the character must select one. This cannot be changed until the next time the reality is imposed. In addition, he may use other rune bennies as normal to provide one-use Trait Benefit, or activate the Non-Trait Benefit.

On a raise, the effect lasts until the hero next sleeps (even the gods sleep, as several myths relate), falls un-

conscious, or is otherwise incapable of spending a free action to maintain the reality.

Alternatively, instead of gaining the rune's Trait Benefit, the character can opt to increase his Faith die by one step for the purposes of casting spells, resisting disruption, and swapping Faith for other Traits.

Failure reduces a character's Spirit and Faith by one die type. Below a d4, the character cannot use any bennies until his Trait recovers to a d4. A modified result of 1 or less results in a two dice step reduction. One die type is recovered for each one hour of rest.

Imposing reality may **never** be attempted in a god's personal hall. Here that deity rules supreme, and not even the other gods can change that world view. Thus, the hall of Eostre Animalmother is always governed by her view of reality, no matter who enters. A character who has the god as his patron automatically the Trait Benefit so long as he remains inside his god's hall. Thus, in Eira's hall, all who worship her automatically have +2 to Healing rolls. This does not stack with the character's imposed reality, but it does stack with spending a rune benny for a one-off bonus. Worshippers of other gods are automatically placed in the hall owner's reality, cancelling any personal reality view they have imposed.

Reality Wars: Instead of affecting himself, a character may choose to impose his version of reality on another creature. This is most often done to deny an enemy access to his rune bennies' powers.

The character picks one target within his Faith die in game inches, spends a benny as above, and makes an opposed Faith roll. With success, his enemy becomes part of the character's reality view for the next hour, until the character drops the effect, or until the victim successfully imposes his own reality. The character gains none of the bonuses above from this use of imposing reality.

SINS

Because the characters' souls are now tied to one god for eternity, their free will is also greatly restricted. Regardless of his occupation in life, every character is now subjected to his patron deity's sins list. While it might seem non-clerics get off lightly, there are penalties to be paid for sinning, as detailed below.

A minor sin gives a -2 penalty to any use of Faith. This is not cumulative with a cleric's normal penalty—it just expands the remit to cover using Faith in place of other Traits and imposing reality. Furthermore, minor sinners cannot gain the Non-Trait Benefit from spending a rune benny. Major and mortal sins prohibit any use of Faith.

SPELLCASTING

Magic: The Siphoning has no effect in Godsheim.

The magical threads woven by magicians have their origins in this realm. Casters are thus exposed to the raw source rather than the refined threads that reach the mortal realm. This makes magic harder to control, and more dangerous if not handled correctly.

Casting rolls suffer a -1 penalty per Rank of the spell. So that's -1 at Novice, -2 at Seasoned, and so on. Magical backlash is as per the No Power Points setting rules in *Savage Worlds Deluxe*, except that magicians subtract half their arcane skill die (see below) from the total.

Miracles: On the mortal realm, clerics are shielded from the raw spiritual energy of the gods, who grant spells through functionaries. In Godsheim, that access is direct and personal, making it harder to contain and shape, and more dangerous to wield casually. Casting miracles uses the same casting penalties and backlash rules as above.

Spells: The *gravespeak* spell does not function in the realm of the gods.

SPIRITUAL POWERS

Existing player characters without Faith immediately gain Faith d4, even if they have the Arcane Background (Magic) Edge. This is not free—it costs the hero his next advancement. Clerics gain no additional Faith bonus, but they have saved themselves an advancement. If you're starting a Godsheim campaign with new characters, they *must* have Faith d4+ before starting play.

Wild Card monsters of above animal intelligence and NPC archetypes gain a Faith die equal to one die type lower than their Spirit (minimum d4) if they don't have it already. Other NPCs and intelligent creatures have Faith d4. Non-intelligent creatures have no Faith—they are incapable of worshipping the gods in any meaningful way, or affecting reality.

Any hero can learn to draw on his god's spiritual energy. Any character, even one with Arcane Background (Magic), can take Arcane Background (Miracles). Where a god allows multiple signature spells, the character must pick one. However, since he took the Edge after death he is not considered to be either a priest or a paladin, and thus can never take the Champion of the Faith or Holy Warrior Edges.

● CHAMPION CULTS ●

Champion cults, introduced in another free download, are one way for a character's name to survive through eternity, albeit among one particular faith, and often in a small geographical area. In order to become a champion, a player character must fulfill multiple requirements.

First, he must have a patron deity. More importantly, he must have had the same patron deity all his life. He need not have led a perfect life or been free from sin, though doing so greatly helps one's chances. Similarly, he need not have been a devotee, though again it helps. Being a cleric is not a requirement, and certainly not a guarantee.

Second, he must have *completed* a lengthy, arduous, costly, or truly legendary feat, or shown immense devotion throughout his life. Typically this will cost the hero

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his life (as with Vyner the Smith), be a single-minded quest that consumes much of his adult life at the expense of all other endeavors (as with Agroramovix the Relentless), or last a life time and cause great discomfort (as with Sigric the Mule).

What qualifies is ultimately the GM's decision, but champion status should be a reward for *exceptional* role playing, devotion to a cult, and ultimately sacrifice, not the expected fate of every hero who happens to slay a few dragons. Remember, champions are known for one thing and one thing only—high generic Glory, which usually means lots of minor quests, is not a requirement. Slaying a liche bare handed while half-blinded, heavily wounded, and with absolutely no support (magical or mundane) is a heroic deed worthy of much praise, but it won't earn champion status—lots of heroes of old slew liches under equally taxing circumstances, and their names are largely forgotten. However, devoting years of your life to single-mindedly hunting down and slaying one the Dark Triumvirate likely qualifies, though.

Note that single-mindedly prevents the hero undertaking any other adventures, a restriction that automatically limits player characters becoming champions by

the dozen. Of course, the character can go on as many adventures as he wants before the quest begins or after it is undertaken.

Third, the character must be dead. He can enjoy fame in life (through the Heroic Aura and Immortalized in Song Glory awards), but he is not considered a champion—that is an honor bestowed by the gods.

If the GM agrees the late hero's life was worthy, he becomes a cult champion. Regardless of Glory, his replacement character (related or otherwise) starts with the full Experience Points of the character he is replacing. The player gets to pick the spell he grants his followers, and should write up a brief history of his hero (100-200 words). The GM, however, determines the sins.

DEATH IS BUT THE END OF ONE JOURNEY, AND THE BE- GINNING OF ANOTHER

